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PLANNING FOR STEWARDSHIP

developing a giving program for congregations

by Thomas Heyd

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AT CLAREMONT
California

Planning for Stewardship

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Foreword

I have never liked the word *stewardship*. It conveys all the romance and verve of a statistical market report: fascinating for a few investors but meaningless to most readers. Even now, I am aware that the very title of this booklet will not, therefore, assure wide interest, and for the few brave readers like yourself, I hope that interest can be sustained long enough to get beyond that awful word, *stewardship*. It sticks to the roof of my mouth like cheap peanut butter.

With the optimism of a teenager, I tried other words¹ as substitutes for *steward* or *stewardship*:

1. *husbandry*—the control and judicious use of resources (a good word, but sexist today)
2. *management*—conducting business or household affairs with economy and care (better, but too secular in connotation)
3. *bailiffship*—managing an estate or farm (close, but sounds too much like jail)
4. *seneschal*—an agent or bailiff in charge of a lord's estate (closer, but who ever heard of the word?)
5. *procurator*—one who manages another's affairs (not bad, but a bit obscure)
6. *curatorship*—care and superintendence of something (sounds antique, doesn't it?)

But they just don't say what *stewardship* says. Other words weren't any better. Consider such unlikely designations as *factor*, *majordomo*, *housekeeper*, *proctor*, *croupier*, or *deputy* to signify the richness of the word *steward*.

Part of my dislike for the word may stem from having to admit the earthy origin of the steward as *sty-ward*: "keeper of the (pig) sty." I have cleaned pig pens. Ugh!

¹Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 8th ed.

Another reason may be my inner realization of what a failure I have been as a reliable steward. I have not spoken out against obvious neglect of God's creation and my own environment. *Ecology* was an unknown word to me until recently. I continue to buy things I don't really need and then complain of their high prices. Except to vote, I do not participate in community affairs as I know I should. In short, I realize now that stewardship itself is not an option. I can only elect to be a "good" steward or a "bad" steward. If I "choose not to be a steward" (or refuse to make a choice) I have simply chosen to be a bad steward.

Whether my reasons are external or internal, I must deal with "stewardship"—even though the word is oppressive to me. I must take stewardship seriously because it is a serious matter.

Sometimes we treat the word *stewardship* like we treat the word *death*. We say, "he passed away," or "she's terminal." Still, death, like birth, is a reality of life. In a similar way, we hear it said, "We never talk about money in our congregation" or "Stewardship of money is never mentioned from the pulpit." Yet, Jesus our Lord had no such inhibitions. Money was a topic frequently discussed by Jesus. Its use was not so personal or private as to be above scrutiny. Indeed, the use of money was the most frequent subject of his parables: 17 of them, out of 42! Money and its possession are not evil or sinful in themselves. Rather placing possessions above other values is a source of sin. Love of riches interferes with love of God. It's simple. It's a form of idolatry. The "eye of the needle" is roomy enough for the rich person but is a difficult passage—a "fat man's misery."

Our culture, indeed many cultures, measure achievement by acquisition. We pretend that acquisition means power. Hence, rich nations are powerful nations. Rich persons are powerful persons. Yes, even rich churches can be powerful churches. And power, like possessions, corrupts when seen as earned, self-made, exclusively-owned power. The temptation is no less real for us today than it was when offered to Jesus on that high mountain by the devil. We are to choose *whom* we worship, *where* our power is, *which* treasure we value above all. . . .

Pray that we can say with Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!" and with Paul, "All we are, all we possess, we present 'as a living sacrifice, acceptable to God'—our reasonable service."

John R. Dewey

Division for Life and Mission in the Congregation
The American Lutheran Church

Biblical Stewardship

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?" cried the psalmist. His cry echoes the perplexity of countless men and women who know the grace of God. By his grace he fashioned the universe and filled this shell of clay with the breath of life. He does not abandon, but sustains and nurtures this life from day to day. Through his only Son he entered our human arena. The cost of such giving was rejection, denial, and death upon a cross. Our legacy is the abundant life here, now, and in heaven forever. In the face of such giving, we can understand and appreciate the psalmist's need for an appropriate response.

Should that response not be one of obedience? The vocabulary of the (Hebrew) psalmist has no word to convey that meaning. In Hebrew, the concept of obedience is included in the word for "hearing." Hearing God's word allows no alternative but obedience. One who has experienced God's gifts does not have a choice about whether or not to obey, but is limited only in the degree of obedience. As an expression of our gratitude and faith, we need to obey God. Having received, we need to give. Christians have long recognized this need. It is fitting, therefore, that congregations charge councils and committees to assist individuals in making an appropriate and effective response.

That activity in the church, which includes both the guidance of the committees and the response of the people, is commonly called stewardship. The steward was one who managed the household or the property of another.

When the New Testament was translated, *steward* became the best word for the Greek *oikonomos* (Luke 12:42; 16:1). In Greece, the *oikonomos* (from two root words: *oikos* meaning 'house,' and *nemo* meaning 'to manage') was responsible for financial management. Erastus (Romans 16:23) was the *oikonomos*—'treasurer'—of a city. Our English *economy* and *economics* reflect the word's sound and meaning. Although this basic word, *oikonomos*, helps us in our un-

derstanding of stewardship, many more words are needed to catch this term's wider sweep of meaning.

We are hampered by those popular ideas about stewardship which limit it to the local church. We also need to recognize that we are a people programmed for ownership and consumption. Among the shrill sounds of the marketplace—promising white teeth, quick relief, and talking cereals—the footfalls of almighty God are muffled. His call often goes unrecognized and his gifts unappreciated. Clever programs and techniques inspired by successful selling can only add to the din already ringing in our ears.

Effective biblical stewardship thus calls us back to God's word. The words of men and women, whether they be statistics or hair-raising missionary stories and challenges, taper off, but those who are motivated by the word of God have a bottomless resource for faith and commitment. From his word comes this perspective for stewardship:

1. **GOD HAS SUCH A HIGH REGARD FOR HUMANITY** that he has authorized us to deal freely and independently on God's behalf. God created us a little lower than himself and placed us in a position of authority and dominion. And he constantly punctuates his history with an interruption of divine love and mercy. Even when in sin we bartered away our position, God redeemed us in Christ and restored us to membership in his family.
2. **WE ARE ADMINISTRATORS, and not owners.** All that we have, all that we are and hope to be, belongs to God. It is entrusted to our care during our time on earth. The earth belongs to the Lord. God never relinquishes ownership. We are administrators and managers. Of all the treasure that has been placed in our care, the most precious is the gospel itself. We are a "chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" so that we can proclaim the glory of our Father.
3. **WE MUST GIVE AN ACCOUNTING.** We will be held responsible for our stewardship of the high trust that God in his grace and goodness has given us. We cannot take our responsibility lightly. When this pilgrimage on earth is ended, an accounting must be made of our stewardship. Christ often reminds us of that time when the workday is finished. "Watch," he counsels, "for you know neither the day nor the hour."

GOD'S STEWARDS

DORCAS gave herself generously to those in need. She had a great compassion for widows and orphaned children. With nimble fingers and a sewing needle she set an example for service which has inspired others to imitate down through the ages. The ninth chapter of Acts describes this steward as one who "filled her days with acts of kindness and charity."

The stewardship of **MARY**, the mother of Jesus, has inspired majestic art, music, and literature. God's only Son was entrusted to her care. It was upon his mother's knee that our Savior learned the word of God, a word with which he confounded the scholars when he was yet a boy. And when he hung upon

the cross and uttered, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit," it was likely a portion of the bedtime prayer which he learned from his mother.

When the angel Gabriel brought God's call to Mary, she responded, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."

ELIEZER was Abraham's steward (Genesis 15:2ff.). Abraham had deep confidence in him and gave him a free hand in ordering his goods and affairs. When there was no descendant, Abraham was ready to make Eliezer an heir. Later, this steward was sent to Abraham's kindred to select a wife for Isaac. When Eliezer was confronted with an important decision, he turned to God for guidance. His stewardship brought happiness to others, and when it was completed he was able to give an accounting with a good conscience.

JOSEPH, Jacob's son, was the kind of steward who could be trusted in all matters. His master, Potiphar, put all that he had under Joseph's management (Genesis 39). Joseph resisted the temptation to act as an owner and went to prison because of his faithfulness. The competence of this steward could not be hidden, and Pharaoh called him from his cell to be steward over all of Egypt. Pharaoh sat upon the throne, but God was acting through his faithful steward, Joseph.

MOSES was a faithful steward. God entrusted a nation, his own people, to this steward's leadership (Exodus 3). Moses led them out of Egypt, through the wilderness, and into the promised land. Serving his God, he welded a ragtag bunch of slaves into a holy nation. He was an able administrator of God's law. As a faithful steward, he is overshadowed only by Jesus Christ. The letter to the Hebrews puts it this way: Moses was a faithful steward, but Christ was a faithful son.

Isaiah 22:15 ff. gives us a picture of an unfaithful steward named **SHEBNA**. This man never discovered life's stewardship principles, but lived in an attitude of selfishness. He thought of himself as number one, looking out for himself without regard for others. In his story we see drastic results as the Lord removes him from stewardship.

JESUS TEACHES STEWARDSHIP

The thread of stewardship was woven into all that Jesus said and did. He emphasized wisdom, faithfulness, and accountability. God as "owner" and humanity as "administrator" is expressed in the "absentee landlord" motif which runs through the parables (Mark 12:1-12; Mark 13:34-36; Matthew 25:14; Matthew 24:45-51; Luke 12:41-46; Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-28). Jesus also paints verbal pictures of the unmerciful servant (Matthew 18:23-35), the unprofitable servant (Luke 17:7-10) and the wicked servant (Luke 16:1-9). Jesus urged readiness and preparation. The ten virgins were not necessarily great sinners, but they were not ready when the bridegroom came. The farmer may have done a fine job cultivating his fields, but he was a "rich fool," because he was totally unprepared for his final accounting.

Jesus not only taught stewardship, but he lived it. He stepped across the threshold into maturity by being "about his Father's business." From sunup

to sundown his ministry ushered the kingdom of God into the hearts of men and women. He was teaching with authority and had power over nature. He cleansed and healed the sick, forgave sinners, and raised the dead.

He was on a mission from Almighty God, and nothing could sidetrack him. He gave himself completely in fulfilling God's plan of salvation. Paul summarized the attitude and direction of Christ's stewardship in Philippians when he wrote: "though he was in the form of God, (he) did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant. . . . and became obedient unto death" (2:6-8).

Jesus Christ gives stewardship its deepest meaning. He is its best example. But even more, because of his sacrificial giving, we are freed for faithful stewardship. As disciples, we are called to share in Christ's ministry and mission. "Truly, truly, I say to you," said Jesus, "he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do . . ." (John 14:12). The work that we do in his fellowship has awesome and exciting dimensions. Its extent is indicated in Christ's parables. Here we learn how much the Father loves us, even when we are least worthy of that love. He seeks the sheep that has gone astray and the coin hidden in the dust. He receives with open arms the prodigal who comes home with a wasted life. He is always giving more than any human father can.

The parables show us how to respond to such love. We are called to nurture an attitude of worship like that of the publican in the temple. Like the friend at midnight or the widow before an unjust judge, he urges us to pray with perseverance. The measure of our gratitude is exemplified by the debtor for whom much was forgiven. We are asked to love our neighbor and our brother, not with chilly respectability (like the prodigal's elder brother) but with an enthusiasm that does not count the cost. We love with a reaching, serving, "Good Samaritan" spirit that crosses racial, religious, and national boundaries.

The parables remind us again and again that we do not "live unto ourselves." The Lord stepped into the middle of the rich farmer's abundant harvest and ended his life. We do not live by bread alone, and the quality of our life is not related to the abundance of things that we possess. "Seek first the kingdom of God" is Christ's formula for life.

The parable of the unjust steward offers counsel for the proper use of wealth. It is a reminder that our management requires shrewdness, calculation, and "uncommon good sense." Should we as managers refuse to take this counsel, our fate is graphically portrayed in the parables of Dives and Lazarus, the barren fig tree, and the two sons who were asked to work in the vineyard.

Serious as God's warning word to stewards clearly is, he balances it with a word of promise. The parables of the salt of the earth and the light of the world remind us of our mission in the world—a mission which when faithfully accepted, does not go unrewarded. The reward reflects our faithfulness and the master's abounding generosity (the parables of the talents and the pounds).

There is, of course, a hazard in living with the promise of a reward. The promise is God's to give but not ours to demand (or even be smug about). We will have our reward, but that is not why we serve. There is no room in

the kingdom for mercenaries! We have an abundant reward, and cause for great joy; but when we keep a ledger so as to bargain with God and focus our attention only on the reward, we leave the kingdom of God and enter the realm of worldliness. At that point our stewardship becomes suspect.

Our faithfulness as God's stewards brings geometric results. Like the mustard seed and the leaven, growth and greatness in the kingdom can start from small beginnings which we help to plant.

THE APOSTLE PAUL TEACHES STEWARDSHIP

One of the most thorough analyses of Christian giving is found in Paul's Corinthian correspondence (2 Corinthians 9). When the gospel of Jesus Christ took root, and men and women of Jerusalem and Palestine became Christians, it often meant persecution and loss of their livelihood. Paul was concerned about these Christians and conducted an in-gathering or collection for the needy. The central basis for this collection was neither the needs in Jerusalem or Palestine nor the abundance of the Corinthians, but rather—first, and foremost—their relationship to God. We give in thankfulness to God for his "inexpressible gift" to us in Jesus Christ. Those who through Christ have received so many spiritual blessings now have an opportunity to share some of their physical blessings.

The Apostle Paul tells the Corinthian Christians that their stewardship response is an indication of their relationship with the heavenly Father. Those who comprehend their inheritance through Christ reflect the Master's giving in their lives. Thus, their stewardship is marked by an excited free will and liberality. They count it a great opportunity to participate in this fellowship of the saints. Those who live in a right relationship with the heavenly Father will understand all of life as stewardship and will find in scripture a wealth of guidance for their stewardship response-ability.

When the people's response leaves something to be desired, we are often tempted to condemn and admonish or reach into the bag for some clever trick to spur them on. Our stewardship programs can be very clever and exciting, but they have no lasting significance unless the people of God receive his "inexpressible gift" (2 Cor. 9:15), and—through Christ—are ushered before the very throne of grace.

In our stewardship programs we must, first of all, share the gospel. Next, we must remind God's stewards of their responsibility. We are indeed accountable. It is as our Lord has said: "Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required."

Organizing for Stewardship

Organizing for responsible stewardship in a congregation is often delegated to the "stewardship committee." This committee can have a serious and far-reaching impact upon the congregation, and yet it is frequently characterized by frustration and disorganization. In some congregations it is only a "task force" charged with the responsibility of "subscribing the budget." It meets and works with a frenzy in the fall, and when the pledges are in, its work is completed. Often this limited scope results in a single-minded approach—gimmicks and clever programs to get those pledge cards in. A committee which comprehends its full responsibility finds that its work is never completed, and that budgets and pledges are a small part of the total stewardship picture. The remainder of this booklet will provide guidelines for organizing a stewardship committee and the development and implementation of a year-round, ongoing stewardship program in the congregation.

THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Stewardship is a management task, and a Christian steward is a manager of the gifts which God has entrusted to his care. Thus the task of the stewardship committee—and the focus of its program—is the development of Christian lives. The committee has a spiritual mission, encouraging and assisting members and friends in their pilgrimage to the city of God. "What shall I render unto the Lord" is a question that both haunts the committee and those in their charge. As they face common problems and work together, they will grow in grace.

To be effective, the stewardship committee must be as organized and disciplined as any other productive committee in any other organization. To this end, let us consider some basic assumptions.

Assumptions about the committee's members:

- They are deeply committed to the mission of the church and are faithful in attendance at worship.
- They have the readiness and the interest to do this important work in the church.
- They understand their own relationship with their heavenly Father in terms of responsibility and grace.
- They are bold as they share the word of God and yet humble in their attitude toward themselves (they are not perfect stewards, but are still learning and still seeking God's direction for their lives).
- At least one member (usually the chairperson) is a member of the church council.
- Their terms of office are staggered in orderly rotation for continuity of service.

Assumptions about the committee's responsibilities:

- They are not a task force, but a committee which meets regularly (at least every month).
- They plan a year-round stewardship program.
- They study and grow so that they can lead by example.
- They are alert for new procedures and resources.
- They analyze present and past trends so that they can interpret for, and advise, the church council.
- They work in harmony with the pastor(s).
- They develop and work with interpretive devices and reports for the money counters, finance secretary, treasurer, quarterly reports, and annual reports.
- They develop guidelines for handling all congregational monies:
 - a. Funds left at the church office
 - b. Offering—deposit, counting, recording and reporting
 - c. Special gifts and memorials
- They promote special gifts through wills and bequests, etc.
- They investigate alternative forms of financing the mission of the church through foundations (public and private), government grants, etc.
- They work with other committees, auxiliaries, task forces, and organizations in the congregation.
- They promote benevolence giving.
- They participate in conference, district, and national conventions, workshops, and seminars, for learning and service.

Before the stewardship committee can begin to plan for the congregation, it must first have a clear understanding of biblical stewardship, the mission of the church, and the prevailing conditions in the congregation.

Since the word of God is the foundation for the entire stewardship program, the committee members are to become students of Scripture before they begin to teach and lead the congregation. A large segment of each regular committee meeting should be devoted to the study of God's word. There is an abundance of stewardship Bible study material available. The first few pages of this booklet

may be studied in greater detail and additional studies are suggested in the exhibits. The pastor can suggest other sources and is anxious to lead and teach the committee in these studies.

Surely the time will come when members of the committee ask, "Why is my congregation asking me to do this?" "What is my congregation doing?" "What are we trying to accomplish?" These are *mission* questions, and before the committee can serve the congregation, it must have a sense of the congregation's mission. When a congregation states its mission clearly, it has a bench mark against which all of its activities can be measured. Without a clear mission statement, the congregation can become endlessly involved in activities and be very busy, but still lack direction. George Odiorne has said: "The typical church is an activity trap. Having lost sight of the higher purposes for which it was originated, it now attempts to make up for this loss by an increased range of activities."² Busy-ness must not be confused with effectiveness. Nor is a full calendar a mark of our faithfulness.

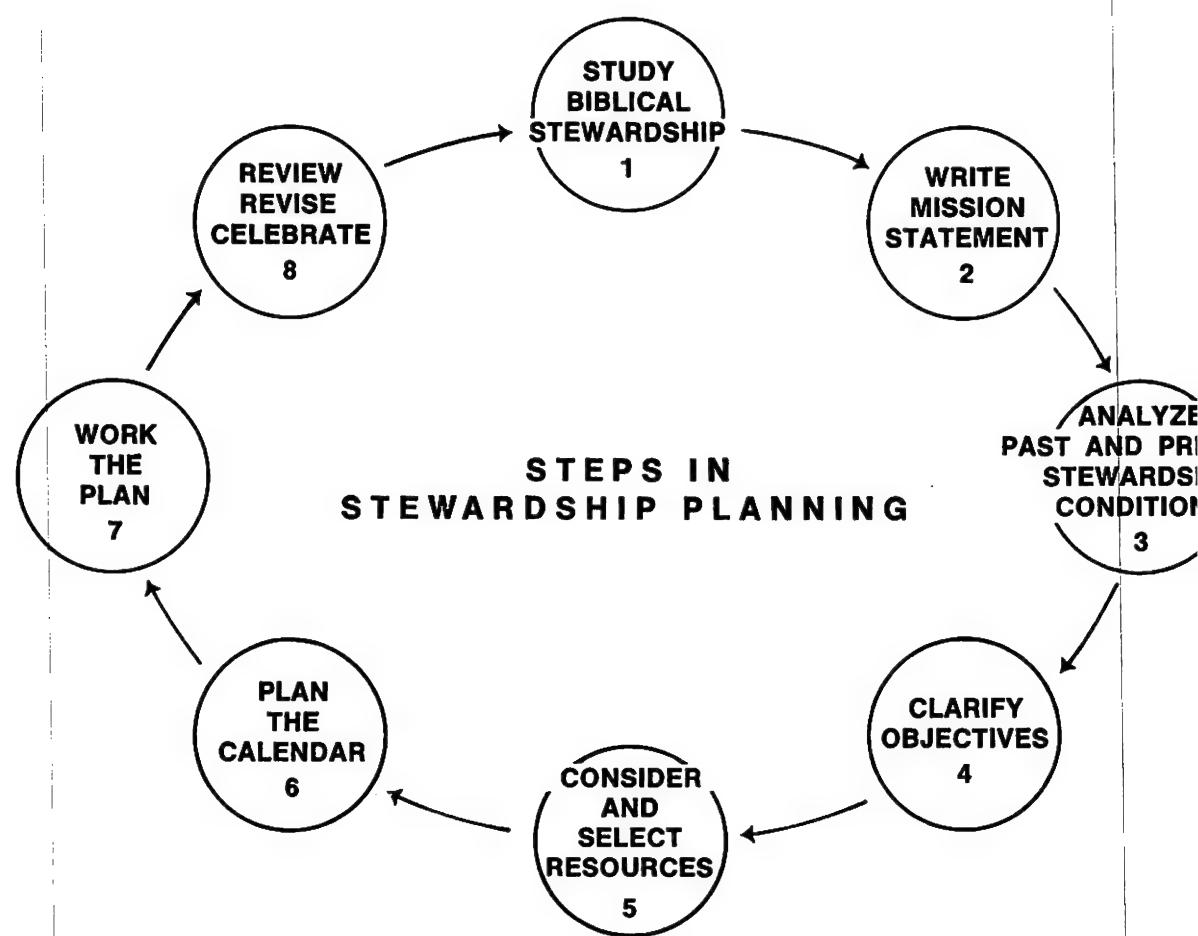
Someone once asked the Czar why his guard was protecting a patch of weeds. It was a significant question. When the Czar investigated, he found that over 100 years ago a visiting dignitary had gifted the Czarina with a rosebush. Because she didn't want "some clod" trampling on it, she posted a guard. The rosebush withered, but no one canceled the guard. As a result, he stood for 50 years—guarding a patch of weeds!

It's happened in the church! The meaning and significance of an event may be long past, but once the gears of ecclesiastical machinery start moving, they keep right on rolling along. What a tragedy that those who claim the power of the Holy Spirit often have no more creative an answer for the "whys" which believers raise, than "We've always done it that way." A mission statement is to the congregation what a compass is to the navigator. It makes clear the direction of our journey. It helps us sift out marginal activities so that we can focus all of our energies on that which is of greatest importance.

If your congregation does not have a mission statement, do not volunteer to develop one for them. The more individuals who participate in the struggle for its development, the broader will be the base of its ownership. It would be helpful, however, for the committee to wrestle with the shape of the church's mission, and write out a temporary statement. This temporary statement can serve as a guide for stewardship planning. The preamble, the confession of faith, and the purpose statements from your congregation's constitution will help in making your statement. A guide for developing a congregational mission statement will appear later.

²Odiorne, George S., *Management and the Activity Trap*

Stewardship Planning



STEP ONE

TEACHING BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP

There are a number of excellent study guides available on the topic of stewardship. The pastor may have some of these in his files, or study leaders may want to develop their own. There is usually no problem with availability of study materials. A difficulty may result, however, from poor response. Even in congregations where leaders personally invite members to a stewardship Bible study poor response is often reported. We ought not be disheartened by a poor response. Interest and response from a few people is an encouraging beginning. In the days after Pentecost, Christianity swept across the Mediterranean world—not because it fielded a mighty army, nor because it was influential, but because the Spirit moved a few to confess Christ as Lord. There were a few who believed intensely and passionately in Christ's death, resurrection, and eternal lordship. If only a few are helped in their understanding of biblical stewardship, a great beginning will have been made.

It is well to consider diverse approaches to teaching stewardship. Perhaps a combination should be used. Here are some examples.

Home Meetings A host and hostess invite their friends and neighbors to their home for a Bible study and discussion of the church. Usually someone trained by the pastor conducts the Bible study. See the exhibits for sample studies.

Committee Meetings Every church committee has a stake in stewardship. Each committee could set aside half of two or three meetings to study biblical stewardship.

The Church Choirs We often thank our choirs for sharing their gifts of time and talents in the enrichment of others. Why not schedule some time with them to help further their understanding of stewardship?

The Sunday Church School This is often a neglected field, and yet a crucially important place to do spade work. The children will listen and respond. The adults have built-in motivation which brought them to class in the first place. You can teach the principles of stewardship through Bible stories, Bible study, special projects, films and filmstrips for various age levels, and stewardship songs. In turn, students can teach the whole congregation through posters, skits, and their own witness.

Women's, Men's, and Youth Groups Many households are represented in the congregation's auxiliary groups. Each could have its own study. Or, perhaps husbands or entire families could be invited to a women's meeting held at the church. The entire evening could be devoted to this study.

Sermons and Temple Talks For some Christians the sum total of church activity is the Sunday morning worship. A sermon series and/or temple talks could share the meaning of biblical stewardship. Additional study and discussion could follow the service. Questions or study material could be inserted in the bulletin.

Letters Some have approached teaching stewardship through a series of letters. The impact of the letters as a teaching device is limited. Such letters need an emotional appeal sufficient to draw and hold interest.

Television If the majority of the members have cable TV or public access television, the congregation could consider a series of studies beamed right into each home. Some families may want to invite their neighbors. A printed guide could be sent to each home ahead of time. Train resource people and print phone numbers on the guide for calls and questions. Such an approach might work well in cooperation with other congregations of your denomination served by the same cable system.

Food and Study Invite the congregation to gather for dinner, salad luncheon, brunch, or dessert. Follow the food and fellowship with a study.

An analysis of your congregation will give you a hint as to which one or which combination of the above would work best in your situation.

Other Opportunities

- Adult Forums and Classes
- The Annual Congregational Meeting
- New Member and Inquirer Classes
- Other Auxiliary Groups
- Church Council Meetings
- Retreats

STEP TWO

DEVELOPING A CONGREGATIONAL MISSION STATEMENT

When members in any organization do not have a clear sense of direction, the result is confusion and ineffectiveness. The same holds true for the church. This is one reason why a mission statement is so important. The church, like any other organization, has to know where it is going and what it is trying to do.

There is also a theological reason why a mission statement is important. Since God created the church, it exists to proclaim his good news. The church exists to interpret God's activity in the world—past, present, and future. Unless the church has a clear idea of what that means in terms of its goals, activities, witness and service, it cannot function.

It would be relatively easy for a group of theologians to sit down and write a "model" mission statement for congregations. But few would read and embrace it. "After all, what do they know about *our* church in this time and this place?" The mission of a church in the inner city would be vastly different from one in suburbia. For many reasons, not the least of which is ownership (if you help create it, it's *yours!*), each congregation must wrestle with its own direction and write its own mission statement. Several steps might be followed in writing a mission statement.

1. STUDY

Invite members of the congregation to participate in a study of the nature and mission of the church. Ask the pastor to preach a sermon on the mission of the church and follow it with a discussion.

Consider these passages of Scripture:

Matthew 28:18-20	Acts 9:13-15
1 Corinthians 10:17; 12:12-27	Romans 12:1-5
Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:13	Psalm 96
Mark 6:7	Luke 10:1
Matthew 8:1-13	Mark 10:13-45
Colossians 1:18; 2:17-19; 4:15-17	Galatians 2:20

Study the congregation's constitution for mission guidelines.

2. RESEARCH

List those tasks which the church does or should be doing. Narrow the list to 20 statements. Reproduce and distribute it at Sunday morning worship. Ask the congregation to mark the 10 which they feel are most important. At the bottom ask them to respond to these questions:

1. What world problems need our congregation's focus and attention?
2. What problems in our community need our attention?
3. What are the needs of persons in this congregation to which we should minister? Tabulate the results.

3. DEVELOPMENT

Assemble in a joint meeting your previous study group, the church council, the stewardship committee, and the evangelism committee.

- a. Review your studies (step one, above).
- b. Share the results of the survey (step two).
- c. Divide into three groups, each with the following assignment:
On newsprint, list some biblical images of the church and then write a mission statement for our congregation, beginning "The mission of our church is. . . ."
Ask the group to keep in mind the main functions of the church: worship, learning/growth, witness, and service.
- d. Gather the groups and share the biblical images and mission statements.
- e. Have each group select two persons who will form a team to frame a mission statement for the congregation. Locate this new group in the center of the room. Provide a table, newsprint, felt pens, and an extra chair. Instruct the others to arrange their chairs to form a circle around the writing group. At any time a member of the outer circle may sit in the empty chair to make a suggestion or ask a question. When he or she has been heard the chair is vacated once more. Someone else may wish to take the chair briefly. This process continues until the mission statement is completed.

4. SHARING

Share the mission statement with the congregation. A variety of avenues should be taken simultaneously. Consider any or all of the following:

- Read it during the regular worship service.
- Print it in the worship bulletin.

- Include it in the parish newsletter.
- Post it on the bulletin board, and in offices, meeting rooms, and the fellowship hall.
- Include it in all official minutes, and in the annual report.
- Share and discuss it in committee and auxiliary meetings.
- Include it in the petitions of the prayer of the church.
- Send it with a cover letter to all member families.
- Include it on the congregation's stationery (this suggests keeping the statement concise!).

STEP THREE

ANALYZE PAST AND PRESENT STEWARDSHIP CONDITIONS

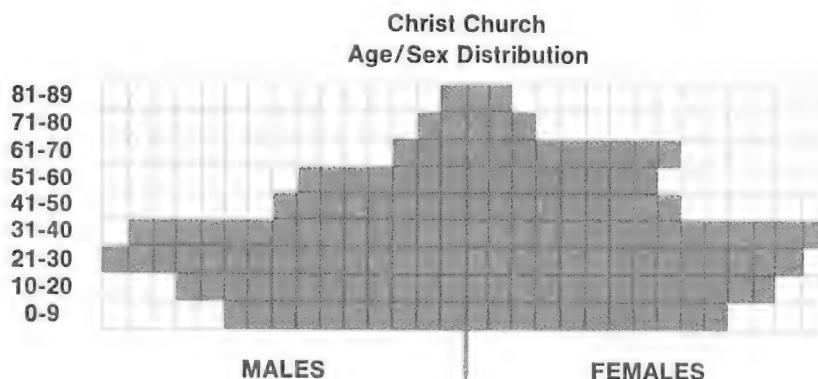
We should never forget that stewardship for Christians is a whole-life discipline—it embraces such concerns as responsible use of energy, controlling consumption of all kinds of resources, care of the earth, and reaching out through community and all sorts of “non-church” helping agencies.

While it assumes its importance, this booklet is not designed to assist in the development of a strategy for whole-life stewardship. Its focus, particularly in the following section, is upon stewardship planning specifically in and through your congregation.

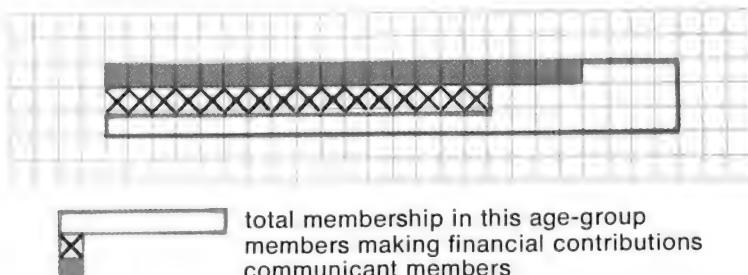
Santayana said, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Before stewardship planning begins, the committee should study past and prevailing conditions. The following study guidelines will provide information for the development of a basic profile for your congregation. Your district and national offices have many tools available to help in forming a more complete picture.

MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

Using your membership list, count the number of males and females in each age bracket. Using a sheet of graph paper, plot out your church's membership profile. It might look something like this:



In the following diagram, each square on the graph paper can represent five people. This profile could also show the total number of members in this age category, and those who participate in the Sacrament of Holy Communion and in financial support of the congregation.

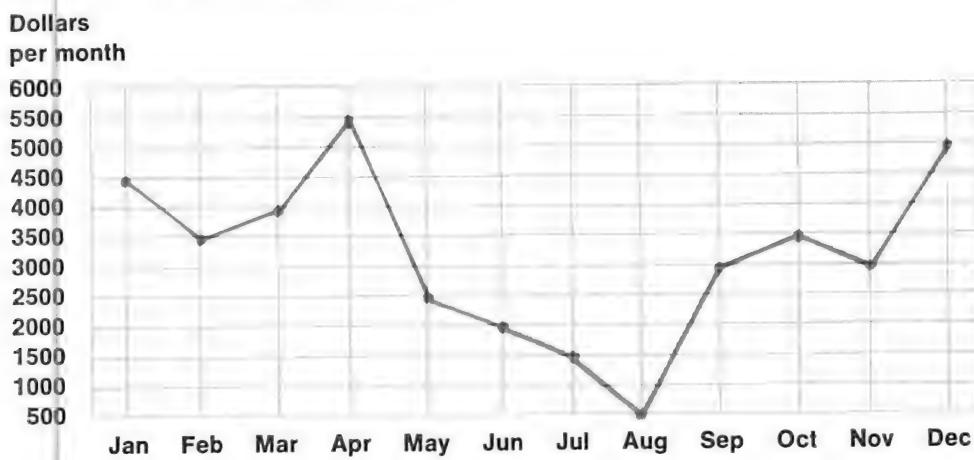


Some Interpretive Questions

- What is the average age of our congregation? (Add the ages of the members and divide by the number of members.)
- What is the median age? (Draw a line on the graph dividing the top and bottom into two equal groups.)
- What percentage of the confirmed are also communing members? How does this compare with the national average? (Consult the statistics in your denomination's current yearbook.) What does this say about our congregation?
- Does our mission statement adequately recognize the number of our young people or older people? Would it be possible to estimate our membership profile by looking at our activities calendar?
- Are we putting great emphasis and service on a small segment of the congregation? If so, how will this affect our stewardship response?

INCOME PROFILE

Using graph paper, chart the income of your church for the last year. Your chart may look something like this:



On the profile the months in which Christmas and Easter occur are obvious. The church council of Christ Church met in late August. They experienced the summer drop-off shown in the profile. There was heated discussion as to what might be done. As the profile shows, by the latter part of August the time to act is already past. If the stewardship committee had looked at an income profile in April, plans could have been developed to eliminate some of the summer slump.

Some Interpretive Questions

- What is the average monthly income?
- Is there an explanation for the highs and the lows?
- What is the average per-member gift? (annual receipts divided by confirmed membership)
- What is the average gift per household? (annual receipts divided by family units)

BUDGET INCOME AND EXPENSES PROFILE

Make a chart which shows the expense budget, actual income, and expenses for the past five years. Break down expenses into four categories: current operating expenses, debt retirement, denominational mission support, and other benevolences (district and local).

	Budget	Income	Expenses			
			Operating	Debt	Denomination	Other Benevolence
1980	175,000	175,500	108,500	25,000	17,500	24,000
1979	162,000	161,500	101,300	25,000	15,200	10,000
1978	155,000	154,000	96,100	25,000	15,400	17,500
1977	142,000	140,450	88,040	25,000	14,000	13,410
1976	136,000	135,000	84,320	25,000	13,500	12,180

This information is available from your congregation's annual report or the congregational summary report that is sent to your church office.

Some Interpretive Questions

- What percentage of your budget do each of these categories represent?
- How do these percentages compare with the national average? (Refer to the statistics in the current yearbook of your denomination.)
- Is your congregation's proportion for benevolence consistent with the kind of sacrifice which members are urged to make for their church? In other words, if we ask congregational members for proportionate giving, should our budget not reflect a similar spirit?
- Go through the yearbook of your denomination and mail a copy of your annual report to each of ten congregations approximately the same size as yours. Ask them to share their annual report with you. Study and compare your church with others. The Apostle Paul did this in his letter to the Corinthian church (2 Corinthians 8:1-15).

MEMBERSHIP TRENDS

Make a chart showing the membership trends of your congregation for the past five years. The chart should show membership increase through baptism, affirmation of faith, transfer, and other sources. It should also show membership decrease due to death, transfer, and other causes. A net gain or loss figure should be shown for each year.

Some Interpretive Questions

- Is the congregation growing, holding even, or declining?
- What does the congregation's growth or loss say about its concept of mission?
- Is growth or loss consistent with what is happening in the community?
- Does our membership growth from outside the denomination say anything about the congregation's outreach?

PAST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMS

Write out a summary of the stewardship emphases for each of the past five years. Describe the nature of each emphasis, the major thrust or appeal, and its positive and negative results.

Some Interpretive Questions

- Will the stewardship emphases of the past five years give congregation members a true picture of stewardship?
- Have the programs been positive in nature?
- Is the congregation anxious to "get the stewardship program 'over with'?"?
- What problems and programs of the past will/should influence planning for the future?

MEASURING DOLLAR GIVING POTENTIAL

Before the congregation's dollar giving potential can be calculated, average family income must be determined. There are several ways to do this. One method is to distribute 3" x 5" cards at a worship service. Ask those who are fully employed to write the total annual income for their household on the left-hand side and their estimate of an average household's annual income (in your parish) on the right-hand side. Collect the cards face down, at the aisle. Calculate the average of those present and the average of their estimates. The midpoint between these two averages represents an average family unit for the congregation.

Perhaps a more accurate figure is to use the county's median EBI figure. EBI stands for "Effective Buying Income" (income less personal taxes), and the median figure means that there are as many families receiving less as those receiving more. This figure is published annually in the July issue of *Sales and Marketing Management* magazine and is available at the local library.

CALCULATING GIVING POTENTIAL

	Our congre- gation
Example	179 (1)
1. In our congregation the number of households is	_____
2. The median (EBI) household income in our county is	<u>\$ 17,692 (2) \$</u>
3. The total income of our congregation is approximately [(1) times (2)]	<u>\$3,166,868 (3) \$</u>
4. Last year the total giving through our congregation was (see your denominational yearbook).....	<u>\$ 58,156 (4) \$</u>
5. This means that the average giving per household was [divide (3) above into (4)].....	<u>1.84% (5) %</u>
6. If next year each household increased its giving through the congregation by just 1% of its income, the amount would total [add 1% to (5) above and then times (3) above]	<u>\$ 89,939 (6) \$</u>
	=====
	=====

SHARING OUR GIFTS



Analyze the congregation's use of its members' time and talents, both within the congregation and in other areas of community service. Is volunteerism encouraged—and recognized? Are members encouraged to volunteer their time and talents, not only within the context of the congregation but in other areas of community need and service? How are talents cataloged? Are they easily retrieved? Is a record kept of time volunteered? If so, is it as important and extensive as the record of other offerings (such as money)?

STEP FOUR

○ CLARIFY OBJECTIVES

Once the committee has an understanding of biblical stewardship, has developed a sense of the congregation's mission, and has analyzed past and present stewardship procedures, it is ready to move on to planning for the future.

The next step is to clarify some overall objectives for the church. Through analysis and study, the committee has reached the point where it can begin to identify the ingredients necessary for effective stewardship in the congregation.

A sample listing of objectives could read like this:

1. Expose the congregation to the meaning of biblical stewardship.
2. Involve the congregation in writing a mission statement.
3. Inform the congregation! Let them know the facts about themselves: budget needs, who they are in terms of size and response, etc.
4. Help members sense the wider arena for their love and service, at home and abroad.
5. Organize and develop volunteer effort.
6. Help the congregation to focus upon the giving of time and talents as well as money.
7. Provide opportunities for people to respond in stewardship.
8. Help members in celebrating stewardship response-ability.

Some objectives may be realized within a short period of time. Others may take several years to accomplish. Some objectives may be avoided altogether, simply because they seem too demanding. For example, some congregations will experience difficulty in getting response to Bible study, and may be tempted to skip this part of the plan. Some members of the committee may even feel that Bible study is a device to get people to sign a pledge card. They may decide that "if we can get them to sign without study, well and good!" Such an attitude, however, robs the congregation of its stewards and replaces them with "dues paying" members.

STEP FIVE

CONSIDER AND SELECT RESOURCES

Once the objectives are written, it is time to "go shopping." Like the home-maker gathering ingredients for a new and exciting recipe, the committee now looks at the resources available for meeting their objectives. Some of the resources are people. Many talented individuals can be found within the local congregation and community. District and national staff are also available as resources. Ready-to-use stewardship programs are also available. Some are tried and true and have worked well for many years. Others are right off the press. Not all ingredients need to be selected initially. As you plan your calendar, you may find that some which once looked attractive no longer fit, and others that were previously eliminated can now work well. When looking at resources, remember the involvement and participation of people. The more people involved in the program, the more widespread the sense of ownership: the more widespread the sense of ownership, the higher the chances for success.

PEOPLE RESOURCES

THE CHURCH COUNCIL

The church council shall have ". . . general oversight of the life and work of the congregation and coordinate the activities of the boards and committees of the congregation."³

These words from a typical parish constitution place the church council in the hub of congregational life. Since the council is the general decision-making body in the congregation, its members will need to be well informed in areas of stewardship response and finances. The stewardship committee also needs to be sensitive to the council's wishes so that it can support and implement its policies. This important link in communication is achieved when a member of the stewardship committee is also a member of the church council. When a stewardship program has been submitted and approved by the church council, the committee will have continued support. It is not unreasonable to expect that men and women are elected to the church council because of their commitment to Christ, their interest in and support for his church, and their example as stewards. Each member of the church council thus becomes a resource person of high potential.

THE PASTOR

The pastor, according to the constitution, "shall be a person whose soundness in the faith, aptness to teach, and educational qualifications have been examined and approved by the Church, and who has been properly ordained. . . ."⁴ Here is a person who can provide counsel and give guidance to the committees, help to develop and articulate its goals, lead and teach the Bible study, and promote the program. Rather than too little, there is always danger that the pastor will do too much. To provide broader ownership of, and involvement in, the program, consider having the pastor do some behind-the-scenes work. For example, have the pastor use his or her influence to secure leaders and workers. Constitutionally the pastor would not be able (ordinarily) to act as chairperson of the committee, but his/her very presence at meetings will show support.

THE PEOPLE

Far too often, people are viewed through "Madison Avenue" spectacles: "Given the right sales pitch, they'll buy anything." This approach seeks to manipulate through emotional appeal and pressure, and its goal is merely to increase commitments. It's no wonder that some volunteers ring doorbells with a pledge card and an apology. *Our people* are our greatest resource. Let us not underestimate their capacity to comprehend God's love and mercy, nor their desire to respond. When our goal is to share the good news and our common concern for one another, no apology is needed.

A positive Christian approach to stewardship will elicit a positive response. And when members are challenged to respond to the gospel in a spirit of love,

³Model Constitution and Bylaws for Congregations of the American Lutheran Church, revised 1977, Article XI 5bl.

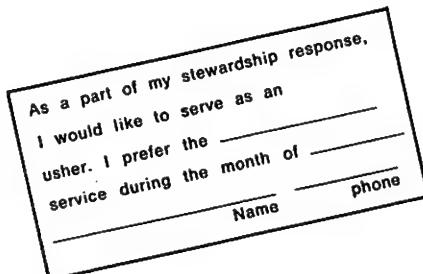
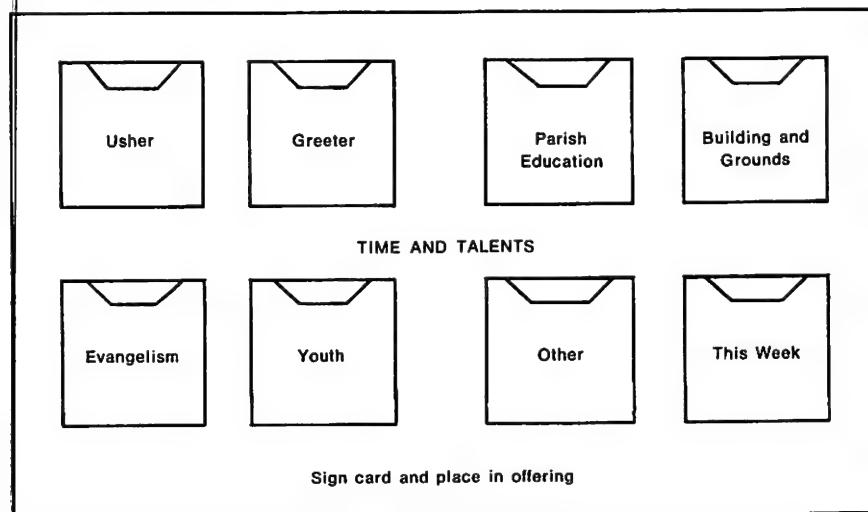
⁴Ibid., Article IX.

they will readily share their talents. Artists, hosts and hostesses, visitors, speakers, leaders, teachers, accountants, bookkeepers, pray-ers . . . all such, and many more talents, are needed for an effective stewardship program.

Some congregations use a skills-and-interest inventory and ask members to fill it out along with their pledge card. The skills and interests are then cataloged and filed. If this method is used, it is important that a good filing system be used for easy retrieval. The information may be taken from the inventory and put on 3"x 5" cards and filed under skills and interest categories. Key-sort cards are available from many sources. These cards have holes around the edges. They may be punched and coded for easy retrieval. The most efficient storage and retrieval system is the computer.

The skills-and-interest inventory should not be a part of each year's stewardship program. If it is taken every five years, the interim time can be used in contacting those who have not participated. New members can complete a form at the time they join the congregation.

Some congregations have been successful in using a time and talents board. This board has several slots for cards (3" x 5" or the smaller calling-card size). Those areas needing volunteers on a regular basis have their own slots. There is also a slot for "other" and "this week." As members come to worship they can take a card and make a commitment in an area that interests them. They sign the card and give it as a part of their offering.



PROGRAM RESOURCES

BIBLE STUDIES Several stewardship Bible studies are available from your denominational publishing house or your national stewardship office. A sample study appears in the back of this booklet. You may choose to design your own. Although it may take some time, with the help and guidance of the pastor, you may want to consider some broad study goals covering a span of years. In this way you could enlarge and expand the members' stewardship perspective from year to year. This might free you to focus your attention on one particular aspect of biblical stewardship rather than trying to cover the entire spectrum each year.

EVERY MEMBER VISIT This program requires the greatest amount of energy, but has also proven to be most effective. The key element is the opportunity to share the mission of the church face to face. Not only can the mission and needs of the church be shared, but the joys, frustrations, and needs of other members can also be heard and shared. For such visits, the congregation is divided geographically into units of no more than seven families. Trained volunteers visit their units on an assigned day, usually a Sunday afternoon. The congregation is prepared for this visit by letter, announcements, Bible study, sermons and/or temple talks. There may be many components of an every-member-visit, but usually an opportunity is given for a pledge and talents response.

COTTAGE OR HOME MEETINGS In this model a household hosts neighboring members for fellowship, Bible study, and a discussion about their church. Perhaps someone else can provide light refreshments.

CONGREGATIONAL MEAL The congregation is invited to a meal, brunch, or salad luncheon. The program may include presentations about the mission of the church, temple talks, Bible study, or discussions. Vital ingredients are a good meal, a festive fellowship, and a positive program. Those who have experience with congregational meals advise that they should be professionally catered, preferably somewhere away from the church building. In this way, members are not occupied in preparing, serving, and cleaning.

Unless the specific goal of generating increased financial commitment is envisioned, any of the programmatic resources mentioned thus far could be scheduled at any time of the year. In fact, a well-planned program for stewardship education which was held in February or May might go a long way to persuade some members that the committee is not merely "after our wallet" or that stewardship means (and the congregation is) "always talking about money."

RESIDENT STEWARDSHIP SERVICE In this program a staff person works with parish leaders and assists them in their stewardship program. For example, The American Lutheran Church, through its Office of Communication and Mission Support, makes such staff persons available for a fee. These are highly trained individuals who will organize the program, prepare materials, assist leaders, train visitors and hostesses, lead Bible studies, and provide counsel and direction where needed.

FUND RAISERS Professional fund raisers are available to congregations and are usually hired for such specific goals as money for a building program, new organ, remodeling, relocation, etc. Although stewardship education may be a part of the program, the results are measured by the dollars raised.

DEFERRED GIVING

The faithful steward is aware of stewardship responsibilities and does not neglect financial matters. Planning and management of assets is a part of our daily lives and should be, for as Christians we have a future! However, estate planning that reaches beyond the individual life is a seriously neglected area of stewardship in the church—less than 40 percent of us have made wills.

The charitable gift (even a very sizable one) need not jeopardize regular giving efforts or cause dissension within a congregation. Here again, planning is the key. A conscientious stewardship committee provides a great service to its membership through awareness of deferred gift plans and by establishing a policy as to how gift monies will be used. The opportunity to do something of lasting significance is truly exciting. And what could be more significant than partnership in building his kingdom.

Resources are available from most denominational offices to assist you in planning and educating. The American Lutheran Church Foundation Office, for example, provides materials and staff services in all charitable deferred gift areas. Other professionals from your community (attorneys, tax advisors, etc.) can help in the development and leadership responsibilities of a stewardship presentation or "Wills Workshop."

A frequent reminder to your members on the value of bequests and the invitation to "Remember the church and its ministries in your will" may provide significant extended ministry funding. Publish your proper legal name to serve as a reminder and to avoid later problems.

General Bequest

I give and bequeath to (name of the church or organization), incorporated in the state of (name of state) the sum of (amount).

Specific Bequest

I give and bequeath to (name of church or organization), incorporated in the state of (name of state) the sum of (amount) to be used for (purpose or program).

FILMS—FILMSTRIPS—PRINTED TRACTS

All media devices such as films, recordings, and brochures should be labeled "Handle with Care." These materials can be very effective if properly handled. A proper introduction and a follow-up discussion will make a film or filmstrip more meaningful. One congregation has made good use of what they call the "reverse offering plate." After the offering, the plates are passed again, only this time the worshipers are asked to take something *out of* the plate. Each worshiper takes out a tract which explains the significance of this part of the worship service, or perhaps a "thank you" for their partnership in the gospel. Many tracts are written with a "gotcha" angle: they have a hook, or perhaps a new idea, that reaches out and "catches" the reader. For this reason it is important to introduce or draw attention to the tract.

PLEDGING AT WORSHIP

Instead of an every-member-visit in the homes, this program provides an opportunity to make a commitment at the worship service. Mailings, "temple talks," and sermons may lead up to and prepare for the pledging. Since not everyone will be in attendance at the worship service, a follow-up program is needed.

PLEDGING BY MAIL

This program usually includes several letters describing the mission of the church and encouraging support. The last letter includes a pledge card which can be returned at a worship service or by mail.

SLIDES

Have someone in the congregation take pictures of the church at work during the past year. Additional pictures may be taken depicting future goals. This is an excellent device for interpreting the life and mission of a congregation. Members who have noticed the photographer at work may then become interested simply because they realize that indeed they are "a part of the picture."

STEP SIX

PLAN THE CALENDAR

After much study and research, the committee will be anxious to develop specific plans. It is essential that planning be done for the entire year. Here is one way to do it.

Gather your committee in a room with a large wall surface and be prepared with many sheets of newsprint and markers.

BIBLICAL IMAGES AND IMPLICATIONS

- * God has a high regard for humanity
- * Humanity is an administrator. . . .
- * Heaven and earth. . . .
- * An accounting must be. . . .
- * Jesus is the best example of stewardship
- * etc.

Write out the proposed mission statement on a large sheet of newsprint and post it next to the list of biblical images and implications.

Tape a sheet of newsprint on the wall and have the committee share biblical images and their implications for stewardship.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Christ-centered mission is hearing and doing the word of God.

Thus we seek to:

- * involve all in. . . .
- * embrace one another as. . . .
- * provide opportunities for growth such as. . . .
- * witness to the "good news" which we. . . .
- * be a caring church in that we. . . .
- * etc.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- * teach biblical stewardship
- * develop mission statement
- * share information with members
- * organize and develop volunteer program
- * develop deferred giving program
- * provide opportunities for response to God's grace
- * help members in celebrating stewardship response-ability

List the general objectives of your stewardship program.

- Post large sheets of newsprint which you have prepared in advance, one for each month. The first sheet should be for August, the last for the following July. In large print, write the name of the month, and list last year's income for the same month, along with the average weekly attendance. It would also help to cut up a small calendar and paste each month on the appropriate sheet.
- Select the program resources which are essential in meeting your objectives for the year. As each one is selected, locate it in the most appropriate month.
- List steps required to carry out the program and the person(s) to be responsible for the management of each step.
- List people resources for each program.

Your completed calendar could look like this:

AUGUST

Income \$12,500

Average Attendance 450

- Teach biblical stewardship beginning with committee and council—use 1 Cor. (Step One)
- Begin development of mission statement following suggested guidelines. (Step Two)
- Ask pastor to outline year-round Bible study for committee.
- Finalize plans for fall emphasis.

SEPTEMBER

Income \$15,600

Average Attendance 630

- Seek council approval of fall stewardship emphasis.
- Rally Day—celebrate fellowship and mission.
- Announce stewardship poster contest to Sunday school.
- Present offering envelopes to Sunday school students—use cartoon filmstrip.
- Ask women's group to make large banner depicting fall theme.
- Display quilts and layettes and emphasize clothing drive.
- Complete the mission statement.

OCTOBER

Income \$15,300

Average Attendance 620

- Committee sponsors Youth Halloween Party/Hayride followed by movie and service of thanksgiving for "All the Saints."
- Share mission statement with members. (Step Two)
- Two Bible studies presented on public access television. Mail study guide in advance. (Step One)
- Prepare giving-potential-and-mission booklet for congregational dinner.
- Mail quarterly report.

NOVEMBER

Income \$15,500

Average Attendance 625

- Temple Talks (two Sundays).
- Congregational dinner. Music, fellowship, meal, giving-potential-and-mission booklet.
- Every-member-visit.
- Tabulate EMV response.
- Prepare council report.
- Evaluate program. (Step Eight)
- Thanksgiving ingathering of canned goods for the needy.

DECEMBER

Income \$18,000

Average Attendance 650

- Report results of fall emphasis to church council, budget and finance committees.
- Prepare annual report.
- Stress God's giving in Christ.
- Remind members of potential tax savings in a year-end gift.
- Check to see that all offering envelopes are distributed.

JANUARY

Income \$15,000

Average Attendance 618

- Prepare celebration for annual meeting —include a song of praise and litany of thanksgiving.
- A display at the annual meeting could depict life of stewardship. (Step Eight)
- Mail final reports showing income and expenses for year, budget for new year, and individual giving record for past year. Include announcement for annual meeting.

FEBRUARY

Income \$14,900

Average Attendance 547

- Take and record Time and Talents survey.
- Visit committees and auxiliaries, present brief Bible study, encourage stewardship sensitivity, suggest use of volunteers, and explain time and talents file. (Step One)
- Announce wills emphasis seminar for next month.

MARCH

Income \$17,000

Average Attendance 640

- Plan and schedule wills emphasis seminar. Seek assistance in planning from your denomination's national office.

APRIL

Income \$22,000

Average Attendance 710

- Mail quarterly report using booklet form which shows envelope number, amount pledged, and amount given during first quarter.*
- Plan and order offering envelopes for new year.
- Use reverse offering — members take tracts from offering plate. Use for two Sundays After Easter.

*Use only when congregation is large enough to assure anonymity.

MAY

Income \$14,990

Average Attendance 575

- Mission Festival—invite furloughing missionary as guest speaker. Potluck dinner, displays showing our mission outreach in other countries.
- Monitor benevolence remittance.
- Plan fall stewardship emphasis.
- Make final plans for Soil Stewardship Sunday.
- Highlight denominational publication for developing mission concepts. Use bulletin inserts and display.
- Encourage set-aside plan for summer giving (for members who expect to be absent).

JUNE

Income \$13,800

Average Attendance 453

- Vacation Church School. Encourage outreach to community which is consistent with our mission.
- Make Stewardship and World Relief filmstrips available in the VCS.
- Soil Stewardship Sunday using theme: "The earth is the Lord's." Stress energy conservation.
- Congratulate graduates. Stress vocations and highlight our church schools and higher education.

JULY

Income \$13,000

Average Attendance 390

- Encourage members who are behind in their commitments.
- Evaluate and revise recording and reporting instruments, and money management procedures.
- Mail quarterly report for first half of year. Include letter from chairman of stewardship committee.
- Clarify Objectives for fall stewardship emphasis. (Step Four)
- Consider resources and plan calendar for fall stewardship emphasis. (Steps Five and Six)

- Evaluate the total program in light of the biblical implications and mission statement and make adjustments where needed.
- Copy the program for a permanent record.
- Present to the church council for approval.

THE STEWARDSHIP EMPHASIS IN DETAIL (a suggested model)

1. Consider general objectives
2. Choose theme
3. Outline program
4. Secure church council approval
5. Select **GENERAL CHAIRPERSON**
 - A. presides at fellowship dinner
 - B. coordinates work of all committees
 - C. has general oversight of total program
 - D. makes final report to stewardship committee
6. Select **VISITATION CHAIRPERSON**
 - A. presides at meeting of visitors
 - B. coordinates visitors' training
 - C. selects Division Leaders

DIVISION LEADER

 - a. selects several Team Captains
 - b. coordinates work of Team Captains until completion
 - c. makes sure Team Captains are at training program

TEAM CAPTAIN

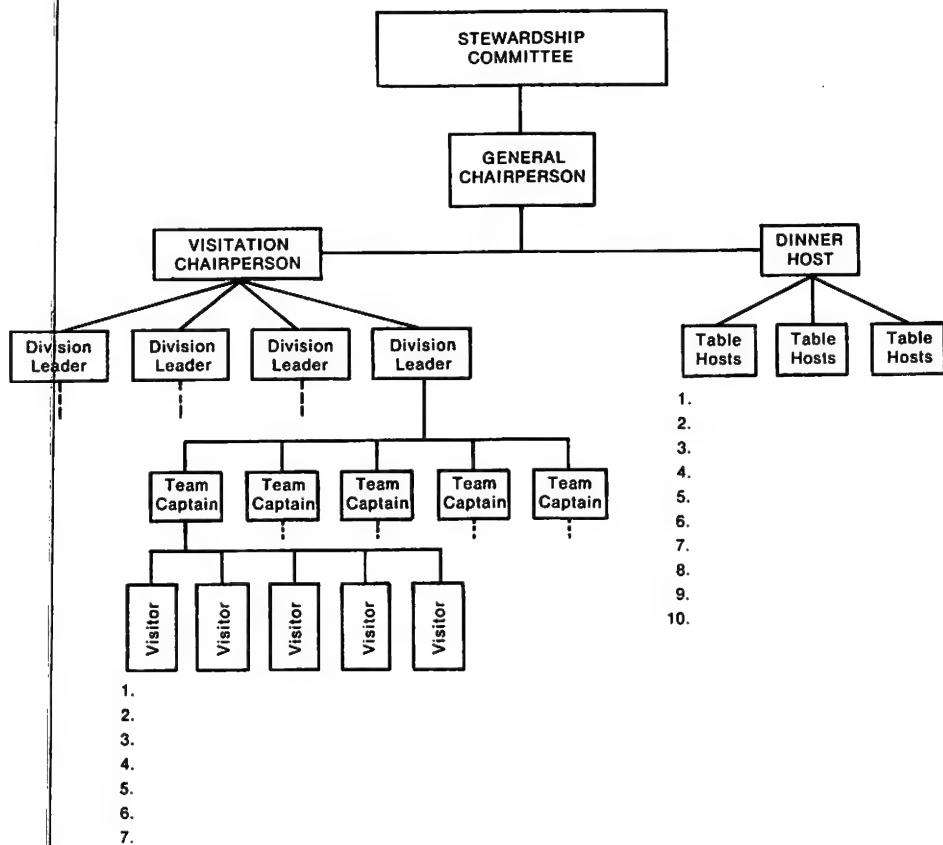
 - a. coordinates the work of several visitors
 - b. assures team members' attendance at training session
 - c. encourages and supports team members until completion of assignments

TEAM MEMBERS (VISITORS)

 - a. each make several calls (usually in their own neighborhood)
 - b. attend training session
7. select Bible studies and method(s) of presentation
8. select materials and resources, and develop booklet for fellowship dinner
9. select Dinner chairpersons
 - A. makes all dinner arrangements
 - B. enlists Table Hosts for dinner
 - C. coordinates training
10. coordinate follow-up
11. tabulate results and file a written report for stewardship committee and church council
12. leadership appreciation/awards

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART FOR STEWARDSHIP EMPHASIS

(One Workable Plan)



In considering this plan you may be tempted to call the committee together to seek a less demanding alternate, or look for shortcuts in the visitation plan. Don't do it! The visitation plan outlined here provides for the involvement of a large number of people. This involvement is one of the keys to its success. A second key is the person-to-person sharing which results. The plan may seem complicated at first, but a rereading and careful study of the organizational chart should make things clear.

STEP SEVEN

WORK THE PLAN

If you have given sufficient attention to the first six steps, the plan will now begin to unfold for you like a beautiful painting. All aspects of the program will reflect your understanding of biblical stewardship and your grasp of the church's mission.

Because each segment reflects upon the completeness of the whole picture, the stewardship committee will need to meet on a regular basis to monitor progress, reflect upon the past, and provide for implementation of each step.

The stewardship committee which has been thorough in "Planning the Calendar" (Step Six) will find less difficulty in working their plan. A booklet entitled *Goal Setting*⁵ can assist the committee in thorough planning.

STEP EIGHT

REVIEW—REVISE—CELEBRATE

What Robert Burns said about "The best laid schemes o' mice and men" unfortunately holds true for stewardship planning as well. We must remind ourselves that our plans are not cast in stone. New information and experience may suggest that our plans should be changed. The stewardship committee should constantly evaluate the effectiveness of past programs, be realistic about the present situation, and—reflecting on these two—try to anticipate any changes that are needed for the future.

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?" cried the psalmist. These are the words of one who was richly blessed. When we fully comprehend God's blessings in and through us, we too search for an appropriate response. We celebrate God's gifts. We celebrate not only what God has given to us, but also what we have been able to do by his grace.

EPILOG

In our search for the fundamentals of stewardship, we have discovered that in his grace God gives us a high calling indeed. We have seen ourselves in positions of great responsibility as we manage and serve our Lord. We have been confronted with the closing of the workday when we are called to "give an account of our stewardship."

It is our responsibility to lay these fundamental truths upon the hearts and minds of our partners in the gospel. Thus, our work is never ended. Those of us whose roots have always been within the Christian church need to rediscover the broader implications of stewardship, which is more than pledging and passing an offering plate. Indeed, the shortages of this world's resources will not let us forget that stewardship involves management and responsible use of *all* that God has so graciously given us.

And those among us who come from outside the Faith need to discover the greater treasure—the gospel of Jesus Christ. An understanding of the biblical perspectives of stewardship and of a sense of our mission is necessary. If we become preoccupied with the problems and temptations of our own poverty and prosperity, we miss the "one thing needful," and our focus shifts from God to goods. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. . . ." He is at once our richest treasure, and the sharing of this treasure is our greatest stewardship concern. To bury that treasure is to lose it. To share it is to find it in a new and fresh Way for ourselves and for the world. The love of God in Christ Jesus is both our model and our stewardship message.

⁵McConkey, Dale D., *Goal Setting*, Minneapolis, Minn., Augsburg Publishing House, 1978.

Exhibits

The following exhibits are samples of stewardship materials your congregation can use. Any or all can be readily adapted to fit your own needs.

CHRIST CHURCH
123 Augustana Avenue
Center City, U.S.A.
WHAT SHALL I RENDER UNTO THE LORD
FOR ALL HIS BENEFITS
Psalm 116:12

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a tribute far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all!
Isaac Watts

Realizing my ability to respond to
God's amazing love, I commit myself
to a life of faithful stewardship.

As a part of this commitment I give of my time, talents, and possessions to minister to a whole world through my congregation.

I will give _____
each week through my congregation.

I will give : _____
hours each month in service.

Name _____

Name _____

Address _____

Envelope Number _____

Commitment _____ each week.
Time/Talents _____ hours each month.

Return this portion of the card. Commitments may be changed by written notice.

TIME AND TALENTS SURVEY

"WHAT SHALL I RENDER UNTO THE LORD?"

Indicate (H) Husband; (W) Wife; (C) Children next to areas in which you would like to serve

- CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
- OFFICE HELP
- VISITATION
- WORSHIP & MUSIC
- YOUTH
- BUILDING MAINTENANCE
- CHILD CARE
- PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
- PUBLIC RELATIONS
- OTHER _____

Over please

Last Name _____ Phone _____

Husband _____ Wife _____

First names of children and (ages)

I/we would especially like to use these talents in service through my church

(indicate H, W, C) _____

Drop this completed card into offering p

PLEDGE PROFILE

	Weekly Pledge	Number of Pledges	Weekly Total	Yearly Total	Percentage of Budget
100+					
75+					
50+					
35+					
25+					
20+					
15+					
14+					
13+					
12+					
11+					
10+					
9+					
8+					
7+					
6+					
5+					
4+					
3+					
2.50+					
2+					
1+					
.50+					
no gift					
TOTALS					

A SAMPLE BIBLE STUDY

(For other suggestions, see bibliography)

2 Corinthians 8:1-15

Do you think that the church sometimes asks too much of you?

What is the greater problem in our church, money or commitment?

Paul outlines four truths about New Testament giving in verses 1-6. What are they?

TRUTHS ABOUT NEW TESTAMENT GIVING

1. (it is grace) vv. 1, 6
2. (giving is possible in poverty) v. 2
3. (it is a form of fellowship) v. 4
4. (first give yourself) v. 5

What are some reasons people give?

PAUL'S REASONS FOR GIVING

1. (to abound in all aspects of Christian experience) v. 7
2. (to prove our love) v. 8
3. (to imitate Christ) v. 9
4. (to help meet the needs of others) v. 14

PAUL HOLDS UP THE MACEDONIANS AS AN EXAMPLE OF GIVING

1. They were an example of vital faith (8:2)
2. They were an example of amazing generosity (8:2)
3. They were an example of extreme sacrifice (8:3)
4. They were an example of complete involvement (8:4)
5. They were an example of total commitment (8:5)

- What is the potential of our congregation?
- Halford Luccock once said that you can judge people's faith by reading the stubs of their old checkbooks. Do you agree?
- Paul challenges the Corinthian congregation. Imagine that he were standing before us and challenging us in the same way. Here is what he might say:
 1. Finish what you started!
(What does this mean to you?)
 2. Be generous in your response!
(What a challenge to the Corinthians, for they were drunk with worldly goods.)
 3. Prove that your love is real!
(You can't hide your true feelings. Jesus said: "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters" Matt. 12:30.)
 4. Remember the grace of Christ
(Paul is not appealing to those who have not experienced Christianity, but to those who know the grace of Christ. Christ and *his* giving is the yardstick against which all other giving is measured.)

SOME STEWARDSHIP THEMES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. GOD HAS A HIGH REGARD FOR HUMANITY

Genesis 1:27-28	God blessed humanity and gave us a position above the rest of the created order.
Genesis 2:19	Humanity names the animals, signifying our authority over all living creatures.
Exodus 19:5-6	God makes a covenant with the people of Israel. They will be a kingdom of priests with access to God.
Deuteronomy 7:6-8	God shows his love and high regard in choosing his people.
Psalm 8:5-8	Humanity is created a little lower than God and crowned with glory and majesty.

2. WE ARE ADMINISTRATORS, NOT OWNERS

Genesis 1:1	God created heaven and earth but did not relinquish ownership.
Genesis 2:15	Humanity is placed in the garden to cultivate and keep it.
Genesis 9:3	Humanity is given animals and plants for food.
Psalm 24:1, 2	The earth belongs to the Lord.
Psalm 50:10-12	The world and everything in it belongs to God.
Psalm 89:11	Heaven and earth belong to God.
1 Chronicles 29:11	To God belongs glory, majesty, and dominion over everything in heaven and on earth.
Deuteronomy 5:14, 19, 21; 22:6; 25:4; Leviticus 22:28	These passages read like a policy or personal manual. They regulate our management of that which belongs to God. Our stewardship does not include the right to dominate, plunder, and destroy, but implies the responsibility to foster, encourage, and bless.
Job 41:4	

3. WE MUST GIVE AN ACCOUNTING

A. Our dominion is never absolute.	
Genesis 3:17-19	We are reminded of our stewardship by the capacity of the land to strike back.
Leviticus 18:24-28; 20:22	The land vomits out those who are not good stewards.
Hosea 4:1b-3	The land mourns poor stewardship.
Job 31:38-40	Let the land punish us for poor stewardship, giving briars instead of wheat, and stinkweed instead of barley.
B. We are reminded	of our stewardship through sacrifice requirements.
Exodus 23:19	Bring your choice first fruits into the house of the Lord.
Deuteronomy 15:19 ff.	The first-born are to be set aside for God.
Deuteronomy 26:1-11	God gave the land and its produce. The first fruits should be returned to him with rejoicing for all that he gave.

C. The *tithe* was a constant reminder that the earth was the Lord's, and that the increase of land and cattle was God's good gift. One-tenth of the increase of the land, trees, herds, and flocks was to be returned to the Lord as his tithe.

Leviticus 27:30-32

Numbers 18:21

Deuteronomy 12:5-6, 17-19; 14:22-27; 26:12-15

SOME STEWARDSHIP THEMES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. GOD HAS A HIGH REGARD FOR HUMANITY

John 3:16	God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.
Matthew 20:8	God's grace and generosity know no bounds.
1 Corinthians 4:1, 2	We are stewards of the mysteries of God.
Romans 5:8	While we were sinners Christ died for us.
Ephesians 2:4	God is rich in mercy and has great love for us.
1 John 4:10	God's high regard and love for us is shown in the sending of his only Son.

2. WE ARE ADMINISTRATORS, NOT OWNERS

Matthew 28:19	We are commissioned as stewards of the gospel.
Mark 16:15 f.	We are called to preach the gospel.
2 Corinthians 4:7	We are vessels of God's power.
2 Corinthians 2:10	We administer the keys of heaven.
1 Thessalonians 2:4	We are entrusted with the gospel.
2 Timothy 1:12 f.	The treasure has been placed in our care.
Titus 1:7 and 1 Timothy 3:2-5	These are credentials for God's stewards.
1 Peter 4:10	We are stewards of God's grace.
1 Peter 2	We are a royal priesthood.

3. WE MUST GIVE AN ACCOUNTING

Matthew 12:40	Be in a state of readiness.
Matthew 25:13	Watch therefore, for you do not know the day nor the hour of his coming.
Mark 13:35	Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house will come.
Luke 12:42, 43	The wise steward is prepared to give a good accounting.
Luke 16:2b	Turn in the account of your stewardship!
Luke 16:10-12	The one who is faithful in very little is faithful also in much.

Additional Resources

TEACHING BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP

ALL THE GOOD GIFTS: On Doing Biblical Stewardship, Wallace E. Fisher, 1979, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn., paper, \$3.50.

GOD'S STEWARDS, Helge Brattgard, 1964, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn., paper, \$4.95.

A NEW CLIMATE FOR STEWARDSHIP, Wallace E. Fisher, 1976, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tenn., paper, \$3.95.

ONE-SESSION BIBLE STUDIES, available from Office of Communication and Mission Support, The American Lutheran Church, 422 S. Fifth St., Minneapolis, Minn. 55415. Write for samples.

TAKE CARE: A Guide for Responsible Living, L. David Brown, 1978, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn., paper, \$2.95.

THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE, John and Mary Schramm, 1976, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn., paper, \$3.50.

THIS SERVICE OF LOVE, Mark Landfried, 1978, The Synod of the Trinity, Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, paper, \$1.50 each (10 or more, \$1.25 each). Order from I & S Distribution Service, 3000 Canby Street, P.O. Box 1321, Harrisburg, Pa. 17105 (payment should accompany order).

DEVELOPING A MISSION STATEMENT

GOSPEL, CHURCH, MISSION, Kent S. Knutson, 1976, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn. (This book is out of print. Pastors who have it in their libraries will find it valuable. You may be able to secure a copy from a seminary library by sending a letter of inquiry.)

MANAGEMENT FOR YOUR CHURCH, Alvin J. Lindgren and Norman Shawchuck, 1977, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tenn., \$7.95.

MANAGING THE CHURCH, Volume I, Robert N. Gray, 1970, The Haymaker Press, Inc., Enid, Okla. Available from the author, c/o Central State University, Edmond, Okla. 73034.

MANAGEMENT AND THE ACTIVITY TRAP, George S. Odiorne, 1974, Harper and Row, New York, N.Y., \$10.95.

MISSION TRENDS NO. 1: Current Issues in Mission Today, edited by Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky, 1974, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., paper, \$3.45.

PARISH PLANNING RESOURCE KIT: Eight Steps to Effective Life in Mission, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn., 1978, \$25.00.

THE USE OF VOLUNTEERS

EVERYONE A MINISTER, Oscar E. Feucht, 1974, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo., paper, \$1.50.

VISITATION

"YOU IN MISSION: HOW TO MAKE A VISIT IN YOUR CONGREGATION," brochure No. 7916, available from OCMS, The American Lutheran Church.

DEFERRED GIVING

HOW TO INCREASE YOUR INCOME THROUGH MEMORIAL GIFTS, Franklin Robbie, Robert F. Sharpe and Co., Inc., Memphis, Tenn., \$110.00.

MONEY AND YOUR CHURCH: How to Raise More, How to Manage It Better, Manfred Holck Jr., 1974, Keats Publishing, Inc., New Canaan, Conn., \$7.95.

NEW MODELS FOR FINANCING THE LOCAL CHURCH, Raymond B. Knudsen, 1974, Association Press, New York, N.Y., paper, \$6.95.

27 WAYS TO INCREASE GIVING TO YOUR CHURCH: A How-to-do-it Planned Giving Manual for Pastors, Robert F. Sharpe and Co., Inc., Memphis, Tenn., \$110.00.